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ABSTRACT

Federal legislation for infants and toddlers with handicapping conditions and their families (Part H of Public Law 99-457) calls for a statewide system of coordinated, comprehensive early intervention services. The legislation calls for an Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) to be appointed by the Governor of each state, to participate in the development of the service system. The ICC is to be independent, multidisciplinary, and multiconstituency in nature. The ICC is authorized to advise and assist in several functions. The level of authority of each state's ICC seems to fall on a continuum that ranges from a purely reactive role, in which the ICC provides advice only on the topics brought to it by the Lead Agency, to actually acting more as a board of directors with policy-making authority. One of the tasks of the ICC is to determine, in conjunction with the Lead Agency, the nature of its role and tasks in the various policy stages. A table is presented listing roles and tasks that may be performed by the ICC during the various stages of policy development, approval, and implementation. The active participation of the ICC throughout the process is critical if states are to create a truly comprehensive, well-coordinated interagency system of early intervention services. (JDD)

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POLICY ALERT (P.L. 99-457, Part H)

INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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CAROLINA POLICY STUDIES PROGRAM

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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The legislation for infants and toddlers with handicapping conditions and their families (Part H of P.L. 99-457) calls for a statewide system of coordinated early intervention services which are comprehensive. Experience has shown that families with infants and toddlers with handicapping conditions frequently require a range of services, which cannot be provided entirely by a single agency. Rather than requiring families to adapt to a fragmented service system, the law was written to encourage states to change existing policies or develop new policies that allow for better coordination of services among the involved agencies.

Developers of the legislation recognized the need for some sort of group outside of the Lead Agency to "advise and assist" in the development of such a system. The Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC), a 15 member body required by the statute to be appointed by each state's Governor, is to be an important participant in the development of a well coordinated service system (Federal Interagency Coordinating Council, June, 1989).

It appears that the intent of the establishment of the ICC was to form an independent group that did not "belong to" any particular agency. In this way the ICC would not necessarily have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo or protecting the "turf" of any of the agencies. The independent nature of the ICC is one feature that gives the group the potential for making a contribution to the development of the service system.

Another feature is the multidisciplinary and multiconstituency nature of the ICC. By specifying what types of members should be included in each ICC, the legislation enables states to bring together consumer, clinical, political, and administrative communities. This merging of a variety of communities facilitates the building of bridges between the involved agencies. It can also provide a broader vision of the service system based upon the participation and contributions of all relevant providers and consumers.

The clarification of the role and responsibilities of the ICC is one of the major challenges states are facing. The legislation specifically gives the ICC authority to advise and assist the Lead Agency with certain functions (Sec. 682.5.e). These functions include:

- the identification of the sources of fiscal and other support for services;

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- the assignment of financial responsibility to the appropriate agency;

- the promotion of interagency agreements;

- the preparation of applications and amendments.

In addition, the ICC is to prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Secretary of Education on the status of early intervention programs for handicapped infants and toddlers and their families. The functions of the ICC are expanded in the federal regulations to include:

- advise and assist in the development of policies;

- assist in achieving full participation, coordination, and cooperation of all appropriate private and public agencies;

- assist in the effective implementation of the statewide system, by establishing a process that includes:
  - seeking information about any federal, state, or local policies that impede timely service delivery;
  - taking steps to ensure that any policy problems identified are resolved;
  - to the extent appropriate, assist the Lead Agency in the resolution of disputes.

It appears that the Lead Agency has the ultimate responsibility for the development and implementation of the early intervention program and that the role of the ICC is limited to "advise and assist", with no clarification regarding the actual means of functioning. However, in their June, 1989 publication, the Federal ICC cautions against limiting the responsibility of state ICCs to "reacting to planning efforts completed solely by the Lead Agency." The active participation of the ICC throughout the process of service system development, approval and implementation is critical if states are to create a truly comprehensive, well coordinated, interagency system of early intervention services.

A review of the literature reveals that, while the use of appointed advisory groups is a fairly common practice among government agencies, clarification of the roles and levels of authority of these groups is often lacking (Trecker, 1970). Trecker notes that governors and legislatures that create such groups typically have not developed a clear delineation of their roles and functions. This lack of precision can cause difficulties in the ability of the advisory group to function productively. This in turn can result in confusion among those already providing and receiving services, as to what will be expected of them in the future, and how the service system will be the same or different.

Internally, the ICC will need to develop its own coordinated way of functioning as a unit, which is composed of members with varying interests and motivations. The ICC might be viewed as a miniature statewide system that must learn to function in a coordinated and productive manner in order to demonstrate to the agencies and varied constituencies that collaboration can be achieved.

The Interagency Service Coordination study within the Carolina Policy Studies Program is beginning the process of examining the various roles and tasks played

by the ICCs. The investigators for this study have developed an initial framework to be used to better understand the roles and tasks played by various ICCs over time. We expect to further refine this framework as the study progresses.

The attached table is presented in hopes that it will stimulate thinking and discussion among ICC members and state policy developers concerning possible roles and tasks. The table lists a number of roles and tasks that may be performed by the ICC during the various stages of policy development, approval and implementation. While the lists are extensive, they are not exhaustive. The framework is not intended to imply that each ICC should perform every task at every stage.

The number of roles played by the ICC and the nature of these roles will depend on two major factors. One factor which will influence the roles played by ICC is the policy stage at which the most effort is being focused. If, for example, the ICC is most heavily involved in the policy development stage, the majority of its roles will involve some of the various tasks related to policy development. At the same time, there may be some policy approval-related roles being played in an effort to begin to lay the groundwork for the eventual official approval (i.e., legislation) of the policy being developed.

As more policies are developed, the ICC may leave behind some of its policy development-related tasks and move toward playing a more active role in the policy approval stage. At this point, the ICC may also begin to perform a few of the policy implementation-related tasks.

Another factor which will affect the nature of the roles played by the ICC involves the level of authority given to the ICC and the relationship between the ICC and the Lead Agency. While the law and regulations call for the ICC to play an advisory role, that role appears to be accomplished differently in different states. The way in which the advisory role is perceived seems to relate to the level of authority that the ICC has been given in each state.

The level of authority of each state's ICC seems to fall on a continuum that ranges from a purely reactive role, in which the ICC provides advice only on the topics brought to them by the Lead Agency, to actually acting more as a board of directors with policy making authority. One of the tasks of the ICC is to determine, in conjunction with the Lead Agency, the nature of its role and tasks in the various policy stages. The framework included as part of this policy alert may facilitate this process.

References:

Trecker, H.B. (1970). Citizen Boards at Work: New Challenges to Effective Action. New York Press: Association Press

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POSSIBLE ICC ROLES

POLICY DEVELOPMENT	POLICY APPROVAL	POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
--Needs Assessors --Gatherers of information regarding policies which impede timely delivery of services --Policy Analysts --Identifiers of fiscal and other sources of support --Conceptualizers of service system --Developers of RFPs for service system --Study designers/conductors --Disseminators of information --Policy Writers (i.e. legislation, regulatory) --Proposal readers/project recommendations --Developers of guidelines for service system --Informing/explaining the vision of service system --Representatives of constituencies --Creators of climate which is conducive to coordination/ collaboration within ICC and among affected constituencies --Promoters of interagency Agreements --Obtainers of private funds for projects --Data analysts of existing programs --Data analysts of existing fiscal policies and procedures	--Endorsers of Part H policies --Endorsers of policies/efforts of other children's initiatives --Part H grant administrators --Policy approvers --Seekers of support from other influential groups and government bodies --Informing policy approvers of need for and value of policies --Create and maintain climate conducive to policy approval	--Gatekeepers of policies as developed by all agencies --Monitors of interagency Agreements --Monitoring and •program quality •consumer satisfaction (parents, providers, payors) •timely service delivery --Information gatherers re: status of service system --Service system coordination --Part H grant administrators --Overseers of local ICCs --Mediators of state-level interagency disputes --Preparers of annual report --Funders of projects, studies, pilots and/or programs --Developers of RFPs --Obtainers of private funds for implementation --Assist locals with policy implementation for: financing, data collection, Child Find, case management --Evaluators of effectiveness of policies and programs --Representatives of constituencies --Ongoing planning and review of service system